

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE KIDS

January 2001

Lassen Children & Families Commission Newsletter

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Up to \$350,000 in Funding Available for Lassen County's Youngest Kids

Prop. 10 Commission makes tobacco-tax revenues available for programs and services for children prenatal to age 5 and their families

Susanville, CA— The Lassen Children and Families Commission, funded by Prop. 10, has made available \$350,000 in grant opportunities to benefit children prenatal to age 5 and their families. Grants, to be allocated to non-profit organizations in Lassen County, will support health, childcare, child development and parent education programs, with a focus on community involvement.



"Children are our number one priority and we must do everything possible to ensure they are healthy and ready to succeed in school," said Jim Chapman, member, Lassen County Commission. "We want to work with the community to build an integrated system of support, using Prop. 10 resources to fund programs and services that meet the needs of Lassen County residents."

The Commission designated \$50,000 for mini grants up to \$10,000 which will be awarded on an ongoing basis until all funds are depleted. An additional \$300,000 in full grants (ranging from \$10,001 to \$100,000) are available for larger projects and will be awarded in **May 2001**.

Programs should support the Commission's goals, which were developed through extensive research into local needs. Goals include:

- Improving the overall health of children prenatal to age 5, with an initial focus on oral health
- Empowering individuals and organizations to make positive differences in their own community
- Educating parents on issues related to early childhood development and on services and programs available to their families

LASSEN
CHILDREN
& FAMILIES
COMMISSION



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Preparing Kids to Enter School Ready to Succeed

The road to success in school begins early. Good health, loving relationships and opportunities to learn all help preschool children do well later in life. Because the majority of brain development occurs during the early years, the support and attention children receive at this critical time has a lasting impact on who they become. The Lassen County Children and Families Commission has the following tips on how you can enhance your child's healthy development:

1. **Be warm, loving and responsive.**
Infants and children feel safe with adults who care for them. These initial attachments help develop self-esteem and can serve as the basis of a child's future relationships. Children under 1 year of age cannot be spoiled or held too much.
2. **Respond to your infant's "cues and clues."**
Responding to smiles, cries (before they talk, crying is one of their only ways of communicating) and other signals help children develop secure attachments. Children thrive when they feel secure and their needs are met, and these early, positive experiences affect the way their brains work and grow.
3. **Read and sing aloud to your child.**
Making up stories about daily events and singing songs provide your child with regular "conversations" that help them develop the language skills they need to talk and learn to read. Even describing the contents of your grocery cart while doing the shopping makes a difference.
4. **Establish routines.**
Repeated positive experiences and everyday schedules, which form strong connections in the brain, helps children understand what to expect from their environment and provides them with a sense of security.
5. **Encourage safe exploration and play.**
As infants grow and start to crawl and walk, they begin to explore the world beyond their caregivers. Parents should ensure their child's exploration occurs in a safe, supervised environment free of potential hazards. In order to feel safe exploring, children repeatedly check to make sure caregivers are watching. Encourage this exploration, and be receptive when the child needs to return to you for security.
6. **Make TV watching selective.**

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***Communities are improved
because individuals convinced
other individuals to think and
act differently.***

Winer and Ray, Collaboration Handbook



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Infants and toddlers do not benefit a great deal from watching television. If you do allow your toddler to watch select educational programs, watch together and be sure to talk about what you are viewing, as very young children are still learning about what is real and what is pretend.

7. Recognize that each child is unique.

Children have different temperaments and grow and learn at different rates. It is difficult to compare your child's development with other children's. You want to accept your child, but trust your instinct if you think your child needs help.

8. Choose quality child care and stay involved.

High-quality child care and early education can boost children's learning and social skills when they enter school. Studies show that the children who achieve better in school have families who stay involved in their care.

9. Take care of yourself.

Finally, parents and caregivers need care, too. Reach out and ask for help when you need it. Family, friends, neighbors, pediatricians, child care providers and others can assist you in fostering your child's healthy development.

The Lassen County Children and Families Commission is funded by Proposition 10, a statewide initiative approved in 1998 to fund education, health and child care programs for children prenatal to age 5.

**Governor Davis Announces
New School Readiness Task Force**

During his State of the State Address, Governor Gray Davis announced a new task force to explore a comprehensive School Readiness Initiative. He appointed the new California Secretary for Education, Kerry Mazzone, to head the task force together with State Commission Chair Rob Reiner. The Governor is asking them to focus on finding ways to provide local communities with critical resources—including Proposition 10 funds—to help prepare children for a lifetime of learning and success.

Given that the ultimate goal of Prop. 10 is to prepare all of California's children to enter school ready to succeed, this is an exciting opportunity to work together with other government leaders to provide a solid foundation for our state's children. The State Commission will keep the County Commissions informed as this process moves forward.



**"A child's education should
begin at least one hundred
years before he is born"**

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.

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- Facilitating public and private partnerships to integrate and expand childcare and early childhood development services

Parties interested in receiving a Request for Grant Application package for the mini or full grant program and a copy of the Strategic Plan may call Laura Roberts, Executive Director, Lassen children and Families Commission at (530) 257-9600.

Prop 10 is a 50 cent-per-pack tax on cigarettes to fund early childhood development and anti-tobacco education programs statewide. Locally, the tax is expected to generate more than \$300,000 a year and will be used to support the healthy development and school readiness of young children. The first years of life are the most important for brain development, and investments in these early childhood years will give Lassen's children the foundation they need to succeed in school and life.

Coming Events

April 26-28, 2001

Infant Development Association of California

Early Intervention:

A Journey of Exploration and Discovery

The Westin Hotel, Los Angeles Airport

Contact Information:

Infant Development Association

Phone (916) 453-8801

FAX (916) 453-0627

Email: idaofcal@softcom.net

Registration Deadline

March 16, 2001